
Mr. **SHEPHERD's**
Considerations
ON
Mr. *Bennet's* Defence
OF HIS
Discourse on Schism.

Henry H.

DISCOURSE ON SCHISM.
OF THIS
MR. BENNET'S DEFENCE
CONSIDERATIONS
MR. SHEPHERD'S



SOME
Considerations
ON
Mr. Bennet's Defence
OF HIS
Discourse on Schism.

S H E W I N G,

- I. That the Church of *Corinth* was a Particular Congregation.
- II. Giving a Just Account of the Author's leaving the Church of *England*.
- III. The Dissenting Ministry is a True Ministry, Sent and Approv'd of God.

By Way of Letter to Mr. Bennet.

By *Thomas Shepherd*, M. A.

Ἀνοήτῳ γὰρ ἐπερωτήσαντι σοφίαν, σοφία λογιζήσεται· τῷ δὲ κατὰ τὴν ἑαυτοῦ φαντασίαν, δόξαντι φρονίμῳ ἔναι, πολὺ τὸ ἁτιμίας προσγραφήσεται. *Justini Martyris ad Zenam & Serenum Epist. Ed. Coloniae. pag. 508.*

LONDON: Printed by R. F. for John Clarke, at the Bible in the Old-Change, near St. Paul's. 1703.

30 M E

Considerations

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Mr. Bower's Defence

Discovered by Schism.



...giving a full account of the Author's
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By Thomas Shepherd, M. A.

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T H E

P R E F A C E.

I*T is not long since I Publish'd Three Sermons on Separation, occasion'd by Mr. Bennet's Discourse of Schism, wherein I explain'd the Nature of Schism to the common People, instead of disputing it ; For what can the Man do that comes after the King ? For what can any Man say to the Purpose that has not been over and over said already ?*

The Controversie between the Old and New Church of England has been learnedly and judiciously handled by Men of great Figure in both Communions ; there scarcely re-

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The Preface.

mains a Remarkable Passage in the Fathers, or in whole Antiquity, that has not been brought into the Field, either for, or against, us; and *πᾶσιν ἀπολογεῖσθαι*, &c. What a Drudgery wou'd it be to be ever making Apologies? God knows the Request of the Dissenters is very Reasonable; they don't ask for the stately Fabricks, the fine Altars, the rich Benefices, of the Clergy; all they ask, is leave to Breathe the common Air, and Enjoy the Protection and Priviledges of Dutiful Subjects, and the Rights of Humane Nature; that as they have Immortal Souls that must Rejoice or Mourn, be Saved or Damned for ever, they may have Liberty to judge for themselves, and to Worship God in the Way they Believe most Acceptable to Him. The Protestants have formerly made
this

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this Plea in other Countries when disputing with the Papists, and sure it continues as full of Reason when the English Dissenters urge it against the Church-Men.

Charles the Fifth having resign'd the Empire, took great Pleasure (we are told) in Gardening, and Reconciling the Differences of his Clocks, which yet he could never make to Strike together; upon which he made this Wise Reflection, that he need not wonder he had not been able to make Men agree in their Religious Sentiments.

Will nothing make some Church-Men easie (for I will not entertain so soure an Idea of the whole Party) unless the Dissenters be made the Footstool to their mounting Pride? Must England (to gratifie a few fiery Ecclesiasticks) turn Italian now, when God is just about to

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winde up the World? Really their Deportment is surprising, and very unaccountable, who discover an extream Tenderness to the Romish Synagogue, and are no Way willing to give her Children Offence, by altering one Pin in their Ceremonial Fabrick, but are at the same time Harsh and Supercilious to their Protestant Brethren. Mr. Bennet lately (that he might not seem to say nothing) sends forth his Defence of his Discourse of Schism, and in a Manly Way brings with him Reproaches in the room of Arguments (Two and Fifty Men of that Gentleman's Spirit would inflame a Nation) tacitly owning that his First Book spake all his Strength; when Writers fly to this Method, Wise Men that stand by, and look on, usually account that they are brought

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brought to their last Shifts, and do in Effect give up the Cause.

In the German Reformation Bucer was treated with very great Insolence, and his Name cover'd with Reproaches cast on him by the Clergy of the Archbishop of Cologne, who protested that they would rather be under the Turks, than submit to the Reformation on Foot. Luther, Calvin, and many of the best Men among the Reformers, were, by the Popish Party, branded for the worst of Villains; all Crimes and Scandals laid to their Charge; more than this, that the Devil had fetched some of 'em away Alive, was very confidently reported; 'tis but the Old Way, Acts 6. When the Jews cou'd no longer make good their Cause against St. Stephen by Argument, then they fly to the Stone-heap.

First

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First Represent him a Blasphemer, and then Stone him; Purity itself, when vail'd in Flesh, was so far traduc'd and mis-represented by the Leaders of the People, that he was look'd upon as worse than a Thief, and Murderer, worse than Barabbas, and therefore fit to be Crucified; thus the Heathens dealt with the Christians of Old; thus the Papists with the Protestants; and thus the High-Church with the Dissenters.

This Gentleman dips his Pen in Flame; and what he cannot do against the Cause, would effectually do against the Person; and I'm an undone Man, if his Pen can make me so, for daring to enter the Lists with his Excellent and Mighty Self; but this, and a great deal more, must that Man learn to Digest, that

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that *Converses with Mr. Bennet,*
for Nature cannot go backwards.

Though I would have no Man
go beyond me in Charity, yet I have
Reason to doubt whether or no this
Gentleman scruples the saying any
thing that would serve his Purpose,
and make a Dissenter look Ridicu-
lous, and would not be Dishonoura-
ble to himself in the Face of the
World; for P. 1. of his Preface
he desires his "Reader seriously to
"consider, that Mr. Shepherd
"has granted that there is a
"sinful Separation between the E-
"stablish'd Church and the Dissen-
"ters. If the Reader is pleas'd
to give himself the Trouble to Con-
sult my Book, and find no such
Grant, or any thing like it, he will
soon perceive how far Mr. Bennet
is to be trusted; and what to make
of this less than a deliberated Fals-
hood,

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hood, I know not ; is this the Excellency of our Conforming Divines ? There were Divines anciently that did thus, among whom this Gentleman would be very unwilling to be ranked, either here in the Thoughts of Men, or in the Day of Judgment, Jer. 23. 31. Behold I am against the Prophets, saith the Lord, that use their Tongues, and say, He saith, (that is) they could use their Tongues any Way ; a sanctified Judgment, or a Divine and Religious Heart, did not guide their Tongues, but Carnal Interest suggested to them how they should use 'em : Let the Serious Reader Pray with me, that the Lord would deliver our Children from such Spiritual Guides when we are Dead and gone.

T H E

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Confederate.

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I

S O M E

Considerations, &c.

In a Letter to Mr. Bennet.

C H A P. I.

INTRODUCTION.

S I R,

THE Historian speaks of some Men that are Born to Ill Nature, and when they are Civil to any Man, 'tis by a Force put upon their Temper; I will not apply it to Mr. Bennet, but am sure he is drawing the Character to himself apace: He that Writes with Bitterness, as Mr. Bennet does, had need Write with Evidence; but you bring none, and yet seem to be affronted that your bare Word does not pass for Proof, and your Collection of Thesis be counted for so many Demonstrations. It was said of Old in Ter-

B

tullians

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tullian's Commendation (tho' he was a Man of a rough Spirit) that he Wrote smartly by bringing close Testimonies from the Scriptures, * but our Brethren dare not venture the Cause upon that Bottom ; but we must, because our Superiors say we must, we must comply because we must ; did the Dissenters Worship *Homer's Gods*, I wou'd, so far as I had Interest, persuade to Compliance ; but the God we Worship, the Lord, whose Name is Jealous, is a Jealous God ; and if after all the Light we have receiv'd since the Reformation we must Throw up our Bib'les, and go back from whence we came, *What then shall we do when God riseth up ? And when he visiteth what shall we answer him ?*

Tatianus bound up with *Justin Martyr* begins very cuttingly ; what he there speaks may with some Abatements be suitable in the Case before us. 'Tis not for you, O ye Churchmen, to Boast your selves against your Brethren, as tho' ye were the Wise, the Rational, and we dull Asses, and ignorant Fools ; as though you were the only Apostolick

Offend. Cent. 3. P. 9. Men

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Men, and we were wandring into a Thousand Heresies and Schisms ; for whatever you have of Worth and Excellency, we have it in common with you ; and whatever you have more than we, (which may be truly called your own) you had it not out of the Scriptures, nor is it truly Protestant.

I am not dispos'd to Banter, I think that too Light for a Minister ; he that is not Serious out of the Pulpit, is not Serious in it ; Divine Things are not to be rudely handled ; much less am I dispos'd to Reviling ; 'tis one of the Fruits of the Flesh, and too gross and black for a Sober Christian ; nor can a good Man Write in your Way without sinking his Character. These are Perfections you may keep and glory in, whilst I fairly pursue and examine what you call Argument.

B 2

C H A P.

C H A P. II.

The Church of Corinth was a Particular Congregation.

S I R,
YOU tell me this seems to be my Fundamental Mistake, to think there were no more Christians at *Corinth* than made one Particular Congregation; you add, *This is the Independant Notion of Schism.*

Call it the Notion of what Party you will that will nothing Affect me; the only Question is, Whether it be Truth or not; my Way is not first to Espouse a Notion, and then carry it to the Holy Scriptures, but draw my Notions out of them; (I with those that call themselves the Rational Divines would do so too) he that is Sincere can no more make his own Principles, than he can make his own Hands and Feet.

Paul, you say, Preach'd Four or Five Years at *Corinth*, and God said he had much People in that City; from thence you argue there must needs be above 1500 Christians. Sir, to strengthen your
 Argu-

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Argument, I'll give you leave to double the Time of Paul's being at *Corinth*, which will no way help you; for if there were such Numbers of Christians then in *Corinth*, the Number of Converts in that Place did far exceed what was usual in other Parts of the World.

Can we suppose that *Clemens Romanus* (who Wrote an Epistle or Two to the Christians there to allay their Heats, and heal the Schism among 'em) should not know whether there were One or more Churches in that City? He Writes not to the Churches, but to the Church in *Corinth*, Ἐκκλησία τοῦ θεοῦ ἡ παροικήσῃ ῥώμην, τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ τοῦ θεοῦ παροικήσῃ Κόρινθον, κλητοῖς, &c. the Church of God which is at *Rome*, to the Church of God which is at *Corinth*; and suppose there were Five or Six Churches in *Colchester*, would not that Man Write at a wild Rate that should Superscribe his Letter thus, To the Church of God in *Colchester*, without specifying which of the Churches he Means? To suppose this then of that Excellent Father, the Author of that Famous Epistle, would be a very Absurd Supposition.

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Neither did they need Publick Places Built for Worship in that Infant Age of Christianity ; for where did St. *Peter* Preach when he Converted Three Thousand Souls by one Sermon ? He had, you will confess, no Publick Place Built for Worship any more than these *Corinthians* had, and (be the Dissenters never so Shallow) a small Portion of Reason will enable a Man to draw this Conclusion, that that Place (or a Place of equal Dimensions) which will hold Three Thousand on a Sabbath, will contain Fifteen Hundred on any Day in the Week ; nor can I suppose Mr. *Bennet* so little conversant in, or unacquainted with, Antiquity, as to be Ignorant, that for above Two Hundred Years after Christ that vast City of *Rome* had no more Christians than might meet together in one Place for the Exercise of Religious Worship ; * and the same may be said of *Alexandria* ; and why we should look for larger Numbers of Converts in *Corinth*, than in either *Rome* or *Alexandria*, I can't imagine ; but I Applaud your Design of making your Appeal to

* Eusebius. L. 6. Cap. 29.

the Holy Scriptures as the only Rule of Faith, therein I heartily Concur with you; to that therefore, and the Consequences that naturally Result from it, I will confine my self.

And though they might have distinct Teachers, as you observe, † yet they were not follow'd by distinct Sects of People adhering to 'em, 1 Cor. 4. 6. *These Things, Brethren,* (referring to Verses 4, 11, of the Chap. foregoing) *I have in a Figure transferred to my self, and to Apollo, for your Sakes*; they might, and (we have no Reason to doubt but) they did, still continue in one Body, though they did imprudently value more than they ought, some this Man, some the other Man, in Contempt of the rest, as we may see too many Instances of this in our own Days; but how shall we reconcile Mr. Bennet to himself? For you have granted in the same Page of your Book, that the First Christian Congregations were not near so numerous as ours now are; they then met (say you) in the large Rooms of Private Houses, (be it remembred then, that the Primitive Christians were Conventiclors, as the Dissenters are at this Day; and I hope hereafter we may meet

† P. 10.

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in Barns and Private Houses, without odious Nick-Names, and Terms of Reproach) and for that Reason (as you go on) in no great Numbers; whence his Reason is given him for little Purpose that cannot Infer, that they had not such large Numbers of Converts in those Days, as you have but just before suggested; and consequently 'tis very unreasonable to suppose more distinct Congregations or Particular Churches than One, with so many distinct Pastors to Instruct them.

As to your Criticism on ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτὸ, it will, when exactly scann'd, do you no manner of Service; their coming together does not Prove, say you, their coming into one and the same Place. Good Sir, what Trifling is this? To give it the best Name it Deserves. Truth would flow easie and naturally, and needs not such force and straining; you may see, Sir, notwithstanding the unbecoming Treatment you have given me, I do not catch at Opportunities to Expose you; I neither Undervalue your Person, nor Contemn your Learning, though I cou'd wish you would use it in a more fair Way of Arguing: Sure you cannot be insensible, that it is usual both with the
He-

Mr. Bennet's Defence. 9

Hebrew and Greek to use such Ellyptical Forms of Speech as this under Consideration, *Judges 17. 8. And the Man departed out of the City from Bethlehem-Judah to sojourn where he could find*; our Translators add the Word Place, that being necessary to be supply'd; again, V. 9. *I go to sojourn where I may find*, that is, find a Place; again, Chap. 18. V. 3. *Who brought thee hither? And what makest thou in this?* Any one may see what Words ought to be here supply'd, that is, in this House or Place.

Besides, to save me the Trouble, you very kindly Confute your self, by observing that *συνέσχεσθαι*, and *συνέσχεσθαι ἐν τῷ αὐτῷ* do signifie and imply the very same thing; true! Then this labour'd, though empty, Criticism falls to the Ground. Should one come and tell me, that Mr. Bennet, and Six or Seven of his Colchester Friends were together, what could I, or any Man that was under an Intellectual Conduct, and in the free Exercise of his Reason, understand by that Expression, but that they were in the same Place together? The Holy Scriptures were not Written to Amuse the Minds of Men, but to Inform us of the Way to Heaven,
in

in a plain Manner, suitable to the meanest Capacity. Your Instance of the Bishop of *London's* writing a Pastoral Letter to his Diocese being no Way suited to the State of the Church in those Times, I pass by.

Now, Sir, let us Review your own Text, *1 Cor. 11. 20. When you come together into one Place*; those Words, *into one Place*, you think might be as well left out; but you are willing they should be read, *when you come together*; should I allow you what you require 'twill not help you; read but the whole Verse, and none can doubt whether they met in one and the same Place, or not; *When you come together into one Place, this is not to Eat the Lord's Supper*; it is plain then they were altogether in the same Place, for they were all at the Lord's Table together, *Acts 2. 1. When the Day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one Accord in one Place*; you think, Sir, ἐν τῷ αὐτῷ sometimes Imparts no more than Persons Unanimity and Agreement to meet together for Worship, or upon any other Account, without any Respect had to Place. This Text proves not only their Agreement in Mind, but also their Meeting in the same Place

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Place, ἅπαντες ὁμοθυμαδὸν ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτὸ, when the Word, ὁμοθυμαδὸν, expresses their Unanimity and Agreement ; they were all with one Accord, then ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτὸ must needs mean something further, render the Words into as narrow a Sense as you can ; and tho' ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτὸ do not always necessarily signify *in one Place*, yet sometimes they do necessarily so signify, and particularly in these Two Texts, which is enough for my Purpose.

Who can doubt but there were more Christians in *Jerusalem*, than in any other City, in the first Preaching of the Gospel ? For there Christ and his Apostles had been Preaching a considerable Time before the Gospel was carried to other Parts : We know *Judea* was the Land of Vision, more notably favour'd with Miracles than any other part of the World ; and if they could find Places Capacious enough to receive their larger Numbers, surely when they were fewer in Number, as at *Corinth*, they might very well meet all in the same Place ; if any thing can carry Evidence with it, here is Evidence.

I had said in my former Book that the Dissenters are not guilty of Schism from the Church of *England*. Schism must be
in

in that Particular Church, whereof I am, by my own Personal Consent, a Member; the Schism which *Paul* and *Clemens Romanus* chide the *Corinthians* for, was in that Particular Congregation at *Corinth*; if this Notion and Account of Schism stand, then the Dissenters stand clear from being Schismatics. Mr. *Bennet* therefore being hard pressed with close Testimonies of Scripture, sees no other Way to maintain his Charge of Schism, but by denying the Church of *Corinth* to be a Particular Church; and why? Because, says he, there must needs be so many Converts in Four, or Five, or Six, Years Time, that no one Room in a Private House would hold 'em. All this he first Supposes, then Asserts it, then says he has Prov'd; an unusual Way of disputing among Scholars; but Mr. *Bennet* has an unusual Assurance; I have therefore been demonstrating (so far as the Nature of the Subject will bear) that this Church of *Corinth* was a Distinct Church, or Particular Congregation; that greater Numbers might well be suppos'd to be in *Jerusalem*, (not to say in *Rome* also, and in *Alexandria*, which I would not insist upon) and yet they could all meet as a Body
in

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in one Place, and so have gain'd the Point I argu'd for, at least 'til it be answer'd. This, says Mr. *Bennet*, is the Independent Notion of Schism: Well then, as since the Toleration the Dissenters have often prov'd from the Presbyterian Principles that they are not Schismatics, so now the same has been prov'd from the Principles of the Congregational Way.

But, Sir, if there were more Churches than one in *Corinth*, should I Grant you what you Plead for it would do you very little Kindness; for still it would be evident that it was to one Particular Church, among the rest, that the Apostle *Paul*, and this Father, Wrote their Epistles, the Divisions among 'em arising on the Account of their Officers.

Besides, Sir, if there were more Churches than One (that being admitted) you have unawares done the Dissenters a Singular Kindness; for then it appears that there may be several Churches in a City or Town without Schism, so I hope there may be different Congregations hereafter in *Colchester* or *Braintree* without Schism.

But

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But after all, this was but a Fanciful Conceit of Mr. Bennet's, dropp'd into a Printing Press, and thence came out this Golden Calf.

But you say, Page 15, 16, 17. that there may be a Schism between Distinct Particular Churches; I have said already, and wou'd avoid Repetitions, that such want of Love is Sinful, but not Schismatical. I don't call it Schism, because the Scriptures do not call it so; why we shou'd give new Names to Things I know not; we are to keep as near as may be to the very Words of the Holy Ghost, 1 Cor. 2. 13. *Which things also we speak, not in the Words which Man's Wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth*; if we let go the Words wherein the Holy Ghost teaches us, we shall, in a little time, let go the Things themselves taught us in and by 'em.

Again, I cannot allow it to be called a Schism, because the Scripture always speaks of Schism as a Sin; but Separation in some Cases is an high Priviledge; *The People shall Dwell alone, and not be reckon'd among the Nations*; and as much Commanded, as Schism is Forbidden, as Isa. 52. 11. 2 Cor. 6. 17, 18. Rev. 18. 4. In

In what follows relating to the Terms of Lay-Communion you say nothing new, or with more Strength than others that have Wrote already, but with less; and if the same Things spoken more becomingly by others have not satisfied the Dissenters, why should they satisfy as coming from you? So that all those Things I shall pass by; besides, I have already gain'd my Point another Way; and had the Dissenters not one Objection, nor the least Scruple, about the Terms of Communion with the Establish'd Church; yet, upon the Principles already laid down, I have shew'd, that we are no more oblig'd, either by the Word of God, or the Nature of Evangelical Churches, to hold Communion, and join with them, than they of the Establish'd Church are to join in constant Communion with us; nor is it likely in this Age to be made an Article of our Creed, that this World was made for the Sake of the Clergy.

You are displeas'd that I gave no Answer to the Authorities brought out of the Dissenters Books; I see 'tis enough to Affront some Men if one will not be as Weak as themselves: Sir, I always distinguish

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stinguish between Mens saying a Thing, and proving it ; and where I see no Proof, I offer no Answer. I own nothing for Argument, but what arises from Scripture, or fair Deduction from it.

C H A P.

C H A P III.

Particular Objections answer'd.

1. **Y**OU tell me, Sir, † that I Subscrib'd Article 26, and now in my writing contradict my former Subscription.

Ans. I don't Contradict either my self or the Article; for the Article says such ought to be deposed; it does not deny indeed but that God may own such, and not wholly dry up their Right Arm, as the Prophet expresses it; but yet in that it says such are to be deposed, it allows such Ministers are not to be chosen by us; and as I have never asserted, so have I never so much as thought to the contrary; for I did not in my Book Treat of a true and false Ministry, but rather was shewing what kind of Ministry was to be preferr'd by us. I ever understood the Article as meaning no more than this; but Mr. Bennet, it may be, will not allow this Sense: I answer, the World

† P. 110,

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does not turn upon Mr. Bennet's good or ill Humour ; it seems from him that his Party Subscribes the Articles, but not in our Sense ; 'tis enough then to say, if Mr. Bennet may Subscribe 'em in his own Sense, why not Mr. S. in his? For I have heard some skilful in Cookery confidently affirm, that that which is Sauce for a Goose, is Sauce for a Gander.

2. You tell me † the Common-Prayer-Book, and Book of Canons, forbid a Minister to give the Lord's Supper to a Scandalous Person.

Ans. True, and yet my Charge holds firm notwithstanding ; for, 1. He may not of himself stop or debar such a Person without acquainting the Bishop within Fourteen Days. He does it then as the Bishop's Curate, and is not himself in the Use and Exercise of that Ministerial or Pastoral Power, wherewith Christ has invested him.

Ans. 2. It would admit of a large Dispute who are Scandalous, and who are not ; but to pass this, all I say, is,

† P. 72.

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Ans. 3. I did not lay it upon their Laws or Canons; but such Persons are employ'd in their Ecclesiastical Courts, that in the whole, Matters are so manag'd, & *de facto*, the Thing is so as I have said; and he that Acts with that just Strictness shall quickly find himself in the midst of great Troubles, as I my self did; nor considering the present Posture of Things, can that strictness and Impartiality be borne.

C.

CHAP.

C H A P. IV.

Giving a Just Account of the Author's leaving the Communion of the Establish'd Church. Shewing also what sort of Persons they are against whom the Discipline of the Church is hot.

S I R,

I Grudge or Envy no Man the Praise of his Merit: I will therefore Commend your Policy, who fearing a close Pursuit, found out a Way to Divert me for a while, in making it Necessary to me to leave the Patronage of the Cause to vindicate my self; but second Thoughts may possibly convince you that you have been Guilty of a very Impolitick Piece of Policy; for a wise and understanding Reader will be ready to say within himself, what is all this to the Purpose? Had Mr. Bennet then no more to say for the Support of a tottering Cause, that he leaves that to fall upon the Person of his Adversary? For when the Disputants come to Personal Reflections, Impartial Judges begin to suppose the Reviler fears his Adversary's Arguments,

in the Church of England. 21

ments, and therefore must fly to some poor Shift or other to get out of his Way.

Or did Mr. *Bennet* take this Way in Imitation of Father *Paul* the *Venetian*? Of whom 'tis reported, that whenever he disputed, he endeavour'd first to throw his Adversary † into a Passion, then he thought himself sure of carrying his Cause; but whatever was your Design, in throwing Dirt with the one Hand, and Fire with the other, I trust you shall see I'm still in Humour, and that I scruple some things beside Conformity, and this for one, speaking Evil of my Neighbour.

Since the Toleration, several Ministers of the Church of *England*, that were ordain'd by Bishops, have left the Communion of the Establish'd Church, and some of my own Acquaintance about the same Time I did. These are Perjur'd, says Mr *Burscough* to Mr. *Stodden* in the *West*; (for the Dissenters are assaulted by the Churchmen in almost every Quarter) and so Mr *Bennet* tells me; Mr. *Stodden* seems indeed to take little

† *Life of Father Paul.*

22 *The Author's Sufferings*

Notice of the Black Charge; but tells him he might well have omitted that; for there are not, says he, probably Three Dissenting Ministers in a County that have Episcopal Ordination; but this I shall take more Notice of, and the rather because this Charge of Perjury is brought against all those Ministers, who, since the Liberty, have come over to the Dissenters, as well as against my self; and I don't understand that any Answer has been given upon this Head; some sit still, and let their Adversaries run on with their Reproaches, believing that God Governs the World he has made; and satisfy themselves with this, that the Lord will carry on his own Work in his Churches, notwithstanding the Rage of Men and Devils; and there are others that have not the Courage to speak for themselves, when they suppose the Clouds are gathering towards 'em.

I say then, none but the Sottishly Ignorant, or those whose Malignity has worm'd out and blasted their Reason, can lay Perjury to the Charge of those Persons under Consideration; an Oath can never be the Bond of Iniquity; it is indeed the strictest of Bonds, but the
very

very Design of it is to bind us to God, not to Sin. It is a most aggravated Wickedness knowingly to bind our selves by Oath to Sin, yet our Sin lyes in our Entrance into such an Oath, not in our breaking it ; nay farther, if my Oath does not bind me to that which is really a Sin, yet if I judge it to be so, 'tis enough for me ; but this I think I have sufficiently argu'd in my former Part, P. 70.

Now I cannot be so fond to think the World takes that Notice of me, as to render the Design I am upon absolutely Necessary : Alas ! how few know that there is such a Person as I in the World ! And among those, fewer still concern themselves whether I Wake or Sleep, be Sick or Well, Wise or Foolish, on which Considerations I have determin'd, that as I will not say nothing, so I will not say much, in my own Vindication ; what I Design is to set before the Judicious Reader a plain Narrative of the whole War between the Bishop of *Lincoln* and my self ; and now I'll dismiss Mr. *Bennet* a while, till I sit down and tell the Reader the Story of one Part of my Life.

24 *The Author's Sufferings*

This *Thomas Shepherd* was once a Presbyter in the Church of *England* *, till repeated Irregularities of various kinds, a Malignant Spirit against serious Godliness, and at last, plain open Persecution, were made use of, as a mean to restore him to his Understanding; he pleas'd to take Notice, this Person never did, with the Ecclesiastick Jack-Daws, sit upon the Weather-Cock, or set the Church above Christ, nor could be prevail'd with to exalt the Churches Canons above Christ's own Institutions; besides, he was much taken Notice of, and follow'd by the common People; had a vast Auditory; these Things were enough to render him Odious to some sorts of Men; so that he was perpetually disturbed by the Ecclesiastical Courts (as their Manner has always been) till he left that Place, though not till he left the Church of *England*, as Mr *Bennet* has falsely reported.

Colonel *Blake*, Younger Brother to the Famous General *Blake*, in a Soldier-like and Unpleasing Way, brought me into the Place, against the Consent of the

* At *St. Neots* in *Huntingdonshire*.

Bishop of *Lincoln*, who had declar'd himself in Favour of another Person.

Hearing that the Bishop was against my going to *St. Neots*, my Father went to wait upon him, and took me along with him; I told his Lordship I was unwilling to go to *St. Neots*, and did desire that *St. Neots* People would desist, and importune me no more; but on a sudden, without my Knowledge, as well as without my Consent, the Broad Seal was taken out, and I, (lest I should fall under the Reproach of Ingratitude) did accept; at this his Lordship was incens'd, and said I had broke my Promise, tho' I had made him no Promise, nor any thing like one; and all the other Breaches of Promise, which Mr. *Bennet* charges me with, they are all like this: He was incens'd also against the Colonel, for telling him to his Head, in his own Palace, that if he would not let *St. Neots* People have Mr *Shepherd*, they would say it was the Bishop of *Lincoln* that sent 'em to a Conventicle; the Bishop threatened him with a *Scandalum Magnatum*, but that fell; but his Displeasure against me never fell, till he himself fell into his Grave.

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I came to *St. Neots* upon the Promise of a Reader, that I shou'd have no other Work upon me than Preaching to the People ; for though in the Church of *England*, Men are ordain'd to read Prayers, and then have a License to Preach, I could not understand how they could Execute the Office of the Ministry, or how they could comfortably give up their Accounts to Jesus Christ at the Great Day, who instead of Preaching the Gospel, spend the greatest part of their Time, and Strength, in Liturgies ; but when this was known, and took Air among the Adverse Party, we were from time to time defeated in that Design ; they perceiving likewise that I did not come to *St. Neots* with a Good-will, but was rather persuaded against my Inclinations, hoped that giving me Uneasiness in the Place might soon tire me from thence, as at last it came to pass accordingly.

Thus (as the Scribes and Pharisees of Old) were perpetually waiting for any the least Occasion against me, and advancing every Trifle into a mighty Fault, away they run to the Bishop. Thus they understood their Business, and would
not

not give the Bishop's Displeasure time to Cool, but took Care to carry his Resentments higher and higher; so that my Life, whilst at St. Neots, was one continu'd Temptation; for usually one Affliction begets another, and one Temptation another; so that many Times I knew not how to Read, or Pray, or Preach; and my best Friends prov'd my worst Enemies, by manifesting a great Unwillingness to let me go; as also by their urging me perpetually to further Compliances with the Bishop, lest the other Party should get Advantages against me, and they be thereby depriv'd of my Ministry.

But I don't design to give a copious and large Account of all that pass'd in those Two Years and half I was at St. Neots, for then I might Write a Volume; but of the Principal Things only, whereby the unbiass'd Reader may be able to judge of the Spirit of the New Church, and how great an Absurdity it is to imagine that such a Man can sit easie among 'em, that cannot set the Church above Christ, the Head and Lord of it.

Some

28 *The Author's Sufferings*

Some of the Church of *England's* Divines have written Books to mollifie and soften the Terms of Conformity; and tell us, that the Conformists do not so much give their Judgment and Approbation of what is enjoined, as oblig'd themselves to the use of them; and that *Secundum Praxim*, according to the general and allow'd Practice of the Church of *England*. This I did in these Days really think had been the Sense of all the Church Party, especially of all the Bishops; and if it were not so, why were such Books countenanc'd by Authority, and suffer'd to deceive Young Men into the Way of Conformity? But I soon perceiv'd my self woefully Mistaken; the Bishop of *Lincoln* I found had other Sentiments of Conformity; however, this was the Notion I went upon, it satisfied me in those Days; but now I Challenge any Man to tell me, what, or where, or who, the Church of *England* is. Once discoursing with a Popish Priest (as I afterwards apprehended) touching the Infallibility of the Church, I gave my Reasons why this Infallibility could not be seated in the Pope; why it could not be in a general Council; and
if

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if the Pope, if a General Council singly consider'd, had not this Infallible Spirit, the Pope could not convey it to the Council, nor could the Council convey it to the Pope; and consequently they had not this Infallibility jointly consider'd: The Gentleman made very little Answer; and after a few more General Words took his Leave; but some Protestant Writers have less Modesty, who will Brand Men for Schismatics for not coming to them, and others for Perjur'd Wretches that depart from 'em, and yet all this while not give us a distinct and clear Notion of the Church, and of all its Demands. One Party, says we, are the Church of *England*; another Party answers, No, we don't own those that fly over the Church and Steeple too; we are the True Church; and indeed these latter have the fairest Plea, if Archbishop Tillotson's Expression holds good, that Moderation is the Establishment of the Church of *England*.

In a little Time the Bishop Wrote up to *London* against me; the Secretary of the Presentation sent for me, who shews me, after other things, my Clerk's own Hand against me; I turn'd him out of his Place upon my Return. Com-

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Complaint is immediately made to the Bishop, yet I refus'd to Restore him, it being my Right to Dispose of that Place, not the Bishop's. Some of the Officers of the Bishop's Court pretended to put him into his Place, and (to my best Remembrance) in order to that, Recorded his Name in their Book of Records : Still I refus'd to Admit him ; hereupon the Bishop immediately Cites me to Appear (not to enquire of me whether I preach'd the Word in Season, and out of Season ; whether I look'd after the Souls of my People, that none perish'd for lack of Knowledge) but to vent his Passion against this supposed Crime and Stubbornness ; according to my Citation I go over to *Bugdain*, several Friends accompany me ; when I came into the Palace-yard there was a great Cluster of People from *St. Neots*, who had ran thither on Foot ; I observ'd the more the Bishop persecuted me, the more they respected me : Look, said the Adversary, what a Tribe he brings along with him ? The Lord Christ says to *Peter*, *What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter ;* little did I understand the meaning of this

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this Croud of People then, but now I do; Mr *Bennet* supposed, (had I been as Innocent and Pure as *John* the Baptist) I shall easily run him down with the Authority of the Bishop's Court; not being aware that I had many Witnesses to his one, thro' the good Providence of God; for this Controversie between the Bishop and my self was managed in the sight of *Israel*, and before the Sun.

We retained *Henry Askley Esq;* to state our Case to his Lordship, who at his coming in told his Lordship, that he came to explain to him a Point of Law which his Lordship did not understand. The result of all was this; he convinc'd my Lord that his Lordship's Courts were no Courts of Record; and that his Lordship's Power in short was not so large as he suppos'd; and that Mr. *Shepherd* had done nothing but what he might legally do.

The Bishop being thus disappointed, fell into an extream Passion, and immediately takes another Way to vent his Spleen.

Bishop. Mr. *Shepherd*, have not you taken the Oath of Canonical Obedience?

Answer.

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Answer. Yes, my Lord.

Bishop. Have you in all Points conform'd according to the Canons of the Church?

Answer. No, my Lord, nor did I ever suppose my Oath did oblige me to it, but according to the general and allow'd Practice of the Church, and in this sense I understood and took the Oath.

Bishop. That's Nonsense; then you are Forsworn.

Here seeing my Lord in such a Passion, and hearing him venting it in such an unbecoming and extravagant manner, who, to revenge himself on me, would, and did, condemn the greatest Part of the Clergy of *England* in one Breath, I was astonish'd, and affrighted, and held my Peace.

This is, I suppose, what Mr. *B.* means when he says I acknowledg'd my self a Liar, and a Perjur'd Person, in open Court.

How! A Liar! Why, in breaking a Promise that I never made, (that is) that I would not go to *St. Neots*? I never promis'd it, but only declar'd I had no Inclinations to go thither, and would be

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be glad if St. Neots People wou'd have excus'd me.

How of Perjury? Why, truly I leave it to the Reader to judge. Was this any Acknowledgment of mine? Or was it not plainly the Bishop's Inference?

Having given the Reader this Story, which is the Foundation of Mr Bennet's Black Charge, I would argue with him and his Party from it; but that I'll do afterwards, and at present carry on the Narrative I am upon.

How fitly may I take up the Churches Complaint, Song 1. 5. *Look not upon me because I am Black, because the Sun hath looked upon me; my Mother's Children were angry with me, they made me the Keepers of their Vineyards, but mine own Vineyard have I not kept,* and again, Isa. 39. 12. *Our Iniquities are with us, and as for Transgressions we know them.* I am ready to Envy those Ministers that were Educated in another Way, who did never Defile their Consciences with sinful Compliances, nor were ensnared with Oaths to a Prelatical Hierarchy; but I may not say to my Father, What begettest Thou? Or to my Mother, What hast Thou brought forth? My Sin lay in
D taking

34 *The Author's Sufferings*

taking such an Oath, and keeping it so long, not in breaking it. The Lord Mercifully Pardon me; nay, adored be the Riches of his Mercy and Grace he has done it.

Some Time after this, a certain Gentleman in *St. Neots*, whose Name I spare in Respect to his Surviving Relatives, having a Commission that oblig'd him to receive the Lord's Supper, sent to me in his Name, according to the Way of the Church of *England*, which I did not Accept of.

He sends the Clerk again, telling me he was at such a Place, (an Ale-house in the Town) and desir'd I would come to him, and he would satisfie me that he was prepar'd for that Holy Table.

My Answer was, that if he would Appoint me his Time, I would wait upon him at his own House.

He sent on the Third Time his Commission to me, and told me that that required him to take the Sacrament.

I answer'd, though that requir'd him to take it, it did not require me to give it.

Note, This Gentleman was a Sink of all Vices, and known by the whole Town and

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and Country to be so; it was said he threatned me with a Suspension, and I'm sure so afterwards it came to pass.

I heard that he went to Two Ministers of the Neighbouring Parishes, who also refus'd him, but in a little Time after he receiv'd it in the Bishop's Chapel.

Surely my Lord should have smil'd upon, and encourag'd, a Young Man, and commended my Zeal and Courage, (as Paul to his *Corinthians*, so I to the Churchmen, you compel me to say this of my self) but I was quickly after this Suspended; not that the Suspension was laid upon that; the Ecclesiastical Courts have more Sense than to lay it upon that which will not bear it; but my Parishioners and the whole Neighbourhood laid it there as well as I.

This was immediately nois'd Abroad; the Dissenting Church in *Stamford* sent me an Invitation to come to them; but a vain and groundless Fear of this Bugbear Schism keeps many Souls at a distance from the Ordinances of God's Worship, in which they should be found.

One Day sitting alone, and reflecting on all the continu'd Troubles I met with, this sudden Thought darted into my

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Mind, " Lord, where am I ? In the
 " Church of God, or in the World ?
 " Is the Station wherein I am Acceptable
 " to God or not ? Does the Church of
 " Christ use to Persecute the Ministers of
 " Christ ? I see such Clergymen that are
 " a Scandal to the Ministry, and the Con-
 " tempt of Sober People, under the
 " Smile of my Diocesan : I am Consci-
 " ous to my self, I only seek to Please
 " God, to Save my own Soul, and those
 " that hear me ; besides these Distracti-
 " ons have brought great Decays upon
 " my own Soul ; I am even affrighted at
 " my self ; shall I sit here till I sink into
 " Hell ? I am sure I shall always be ex-
 " ceeding Sinful ; but here in my present
 " Station, Men will not let me be so good
 " as I can be ; now I read Doctor *Stil-*
lingfleet's Irenicum, and began to have mean-
 er Thoughts of the Church of *England*,
 but yet had no Thoughts of leaving
 it.

During my Suspension, I made a Visit
 to Holy Mr. *Mason*, † who stood Sus-

† I have formerly given the World a short Account of his
 Life in a Preface to Two Sermons of his, publish'd since his
 Death.

pended at the same Time with my self ; and though the House us'd (as one said of Mr. *Dod's*) to be perfum'd, such was always his Discourse full of Savour, full of God ; yet such was the Anguish of my Spirit, I had no Delight either in that, or in his Company ; he would not Advise me one Way or another.

I complain'd I believed I was a Bone out of Joint, having Invitations to several Places at the same Time ; I knew not which to Accept, and fear'd I had sinn'd in going to *St. Neots*.

He answer'd, Cousin, 'tis better to have the Churches of Christ fond of us, than to have them Spew us out ; upon that Answer that Temptation departed, but unsatisfied what to do, I return'd Home.

On a sudden there comes a very loving Message from the Bishop to this Effect, if I would come over to *Bugdaine* quickly, his Lordship would take off my Suspension : This was the more surprising, in that when I found there was no End of Compliances, and that Hard-hearted and Tyrannical Men shew'd no Pity or Tenderneſs to Scrupulous Conſciences, but rather laid more Irons on 'em, (resembling therein the
Grand

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Grand Enemy of Souls) and when I perceiv'd the Bishop did not Rule for Christ, but in all things carried it so as to Grieve the Righteous, and Rejoice the Wicked, I began to be more Stubborn, and did nothing like making a Submission as yet, and truly but very little, if any thing, afterwards ; we heard Two or Three Days after that Bishop *Barlow* had receiv'd Orders from above speedily to take off my Suspension. I go to *Bugdaine* upon this Invitation of my Lord's, Mr. *Oliver Bigg* accompanied me ; my Lord was as Sweet now as he was Soure before ; surely my Lord did not believe himself, when he told me every one was Perjur'd that did not conform up to the Canons ; for if so, it was very ill becoming his Lordship to Restore me to my Station in the Church without Signs of Repentance, and I gave none ; but on the other Hand began to speak, not with over-great Respect, both of his Lordship and his Conduct. Though my Lord was all Smile and Obligation, yet through Grace I was fixed ; that unless he would give me the Oath in my own Sense, I would not take it.

Bishop.

in the Church of England. 39

Bishop. Mr. S. will you take the Oath, *Stare Mandatis Ecclesiae*, that is, to stand to the Laws of the Church?

Answer. My Lord, I understand by the Oath no more than this, (that is) I oblige my self to that Conformity that is generally us'd and practis'd in the Church of *England*, and is allow'd by the governing Part of it; in this Sense I took the Oath of Canonical Obedience formerly, and if your Lordship please to give it me in this Sense, I will take it.

Bishop. That is Nonsense.

I held my Peace.

Bishop. Will you take the Oath?

Answer. If your Lordship will give it me in that Sense I took it before.

Bishop Asks the same Question again?

Answer. My Lord, if you will not give it me so, I will not take it.

Mr *Bigg* took Notice his Lordship gave one of the Officers of the Court a Wink, upon which he gave me the Book.

On the very Day my Suspension was taken off, the Bell toll'd for this Gentleman's Eldest Son that caus'd it; though I'm not hasty to Censure, lest I shou'd Slander God's Footsteps; yet there was
great

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great Notice taken of it, his Son unawares Shot himself.

But this good Humour of the Bishop did not hold long, the Sea began to be Tempestuous again ; for my Lord could never persuade himself but that I had promis'd him I would not go to *St. Neots*, and would Quote that to the last.

The Reverend Doctor *Jekyl*, of *Chapel-street*, in *Westminster*, coming to *St. Neots* upon a Visit to me, I told him the Story of my Sufferings ; some Time after, being in *London*, he took me along with him to the Bishop of *Lincoln's* Lodgings: The Doctor urg'd Moderation, alledging, that otherwise the Church of *England* wou'd scarce be able to sustain the Shock, by the Papists on the one Hand, and the Dissenters on the other ; at that Expression my Lord was somewhat mov'd, and told him he was of another Mind, &c.

The Doctor urg'd his own Example, and that he had won many Dissenters over to the Church of *England*.

My Lord ask'd him how he did it ? What ? By making Abatements ?

The Doctor Answers ; O No ! My Lord ! I Abate 'em nothing. My Lord replies, go on so to win, and the Lord Prosper you.

But

in the Church of England. 41

But, says my Lord, his Father and he both promis'd me he would not go to *St. Neots*.

The Doctor pleasantly return'd upon my Lord, if they did, my Lord, may not that Promise be understood as *nolo Episcopari*?

This threw my Lord into a most Pleasant Humour, that, laying his Hand upon my Shoulder, he told me, that he did not Question but have a better Living for me than *St. Neots* in a very little Time. This shews that the Bishop's Invective did flow from his Passion, not his Judgment; when he told me I was Perjur'd, for would he think of Preferment for such an one?

I don't remember whether I ever saw his Lordship after this or no; for though I had after such Visits Peace for a few Days, yet the Clouds soon return after the Rain; and after I had been at *St. Neots* Two Years and half, I fully resolv'd a Removal; a kind and gracious Providence towards me relating hereunto I must never forget; whilst I was Praying that the Lord would once again (as he often before had done, though I was too Stupid to understand, and follow

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the Conduct of his Providence) open a Door to my Removal ; a Messenger from the then Sir *John Tompson*, now the Noble Lord, the Lord *Haversham*, knocks at the Door ; within a Day or Two I made a Journey to *Haversham* †, in short, clos'd with the Invitation ; upon my return Home from my Journey, Tidings met me in the Street that my Lord Bishop was Dead ; he dy'd in his Chair smoaking his Pipe after Dinner ; but I had engag'd to Remove, and accordingly did so. The Church Party (for I was not acquainted yet with the Dissenters) murmur'd at the Bishop ; and some of 'em imputed his ill Conduct to his Age ; others complain'd he was led by his Servants ; others cry'd he did not heartily Love the Church of *England*, and therefore took the direct Way to make those Dissenters that otherwise would not have been so ; but this last was a groundless Reflection ; for when Mr. *Richard Hatley* (my true and faithful Friend in all my Troubles) had this Expression to his Lordship, *My Lord, it wou'd do any Churchman's Heart good to see what a Congregation we have every Lord's Day* ; the Bishop angrily reply'd upon him, *He turns the Church into a Conven-*

† In Bucks.

ticle ; and yet I us'd to read all the Prayers, though not all at one Time ; what I omitted one Lord's Day, I read the next ; on that Day I read the Litany, I omitted the Second Service ; on the Day I read the Second Service, I omitted the Litany ; saving that some small Passages I sometimes did pass by, or alter ; as for instance, (though I don't now remember all) in the Thanksgiving, *When I was in Doubts about my own Eternal State*, I oft pass'd by the Word Creation ; so in the Office for Baptism, instead of these Words, *This Child is Regenerate and Born again* ; I would Read, *This Child is receiv'd into the Bosom of the Church* : In the Office for Burial, instead of these Words, *In sure and certain Hope of the Resurrection to Eternal Life* ; I Read, *In sure and certain Expectation of a Resurrection to a Future State* ; and many such like.

After I came to *Haverham*, among an Holy, Warm, Lively, Spiritual, People, who breath'd the Heavenly Life at an uncommon Rate, Ceremonies shaled off of their own Accord ; and what my dear and honoured Father's Arguments (who was now gone over to the Dissenters) cou'd not do, farther advances in the Spiritual Life did effect. If

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If *St. Neots* was my *Bochim*, *Haver-*
sham was my *Bethel*; and if ever I had
Fellowship with Father, Son and Spirit,
it was here; here the Lord shone in
(adored be his Heavenly Majesty) upon
my Soul; here he gave me many Seals
of my Ministry; here I Printed my Peni-
tential Cries †; in a Word, here I had
an Heaven upon Earth; nor can I think
poor defiled Dust should have had such
Treatment from an Holy, Wise, God,
had he been displeas'd with me for casting
off a Ceremonious Worship.

Here (Mr. *Bennet* makes another
Stumble) I stay'd as long as at *St. Neots*.
Once I was Cited to the Spiritual Courts;
but having learn'd, by Experience, that
no Favour was to be expected from 'em
on Submission, and having received
renewed Strength and Courage from
God, I was fully resolv'd against all Com-
pliances: I'll not Tire my self, or Rea-
der, with a large Account; in short, they
requir'd me to take out a New License to
Preach, I refus'd; they urg'd I ought to

† Of which I own only the First and Fourth Edition, the
rest were mangled by the Printer.

submit to the Court; I reply'd, I was here before you form'd your selves into a Court, and heard no Instrument read, empowering you in the King's Name to hold a Court. I am a Subject of the Crown of *England*, and can't own a Court that may be held (for ought I know) by a Foreign Power. I expect, Gentlemen, you first satisfy my Council at Common Law of your Authority from the King, and then you may expect my Submission to you, and not till then. The Court arose in great anger and haste to go to Dinner; the Judge of the Court very civilly ask'd me to Dine with him; but I having a great Way home, excus'd my self: So we parted, from that Time I never heard from 'em more, but in a Way of Civility.

I have Comfort in reviewing these past Troubles, as I was then bearing my Testimony for God in the National Church. Now after this I had no further Disturbance from any Man, but Scruples about the Spiritual Worship of God's House begin to grow upon me more and more; and I am fully perswaded, as God shall lead any of his People into Acquaintance with himself, a
Cere-

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Ceremonious Worship, which is no where found in the Gospel of Christ, will be less set by.

A Dissenting Church having heard of me, (tho' not one Person of 'em knew me by Face) sent me an Invitation, with which I willingly closed; and when I left the Church of *England* not a Dog mov'd his Tongue against me. This I add, because of that reflecting Passage in Mr B. that the Discipline of the Church was too hot for me.

When I departed from 'em, I departed peaceably, speaking Evil of no Man; no, not of the Bishop himself, for I owe him Thanks for making me a Dissenter; but have often said, I would forgive him all he has done against me for that Word he spake to my honour'd Predecessor Mr. *Wrexham* viz. *If you Preach again Imputed Righteousness I'll Suspend you.*

And now I'll return to Mr *Bennet*, and confer with him over the 78 and 79 Pages of his *Defence*, wherein he has given an imperfect and unfair Account of Matter of Fact; but there may be this Excuse made for him, he cou'd know Things no otherwise than as they were

were reported to him from that Court ; and whatever the Bishop says, whether right or wrong, true or false, the Court Records.

Mr. Bennet says, had I believed my Subscription and Oath unlawful, something might be said for me.

Sir, I do not fly to any such Excuse ; but that which excuses many among your selves, excuses me. I conform'd at first (I believe) as much as one half of you ; reading Prayers on the Week-days, when in a little Village ; I was satisfied to conform, as I understood the Terms of Conformity. Nay, to shew that I was so, (tho' I wou'd not set the Churches Liturgy above Christ's Gospel) I gave one of the Chaplains of the Bishop a Note under my Hand importing as much ; but that notwithstanding I could not, nor would, do the Work of Two Men ; and therefore did, without the Bishop's Leave, most regard the main and chief Work of a Minister, considered as such, which lyes in Preaching the Gospel, as the whole Evangelical Story does abundantly shew ; and what strength I had to spare by Way of Overplus, I employ'd in humouring
Men ;

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Men ; nor did I ever by the Oath mean to bind my self from doing my Duty towards God.

Mr. B. says, I acknowledged my self a Liar, and Perjured in the open Court.

Answer. The Lord rebuke you.

This I have answered above ; but I'll add, I only acknowledged that I had not conform'd up to the Canon ; and that I never thought my self oblig'd to do so. Nay, Sir, I Question whether there be Three Men in a County that do. O the Misery of such Souls as are under such Leaders !

But Mr. Bennet objects farther, I did not keep my Promises to the Bishop, and so were a Liar.

Answer. The great Promise the Bishop harped most upon, and would call a Promise, was Supposititious : I made him no such, of not going to St. Neots ; but his Lordship would have it so, and so it went ; nor did my Father promise any such thing in my Name.

As to particular Promises, besides this pretended one already mentioned, I know none : Sometimes my Friends, whose Mouths I cou'd not stop, out of their Zeal

to keep me, and yet to keep the Bishop quiet, would speak more than I was pleased with; if the Gentleman means such, am I oblig'd to answer another Man's Engagements? I know no Promise, but in such general Terms as these, that I would endeavour to please his Lordship, and to carry my self as a worthy Man; but my Lord had concocted his Prejudice against me, and it was impossible for me to please him; and I must judge what is a worthy Carriage, and what is not; and the more worthily I carried my self, the more the Bishop was displeas'd, and so were some others; and what remain'd for a Man to do in this Case, when a worthy Carriage made him obnoxious?

But farther, I did fulfil them too far; and when I had done all, there was no End of Man-pleasing; for his Lordship would never own that I carried my self worthily towards him; I was sensible at last 'twas not Conformity or Nonconformity that made all the Hubbub, but all unconverted Persons have a secret Antipathy against serious Godliness.

The Bishop threatned an Excommunication, says Mr. Bennet; true; but you

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say 'twas for Disobedience to the Bishop, not to God. It had been my Honour if I had been so ; throw a Man out of the Water, you must needs throw him upon Land ; cast a Man out of your Church, and 'twill be strange if he does not fall into a better.

You have excommunicated some of the best Men God had upon Earth, and others you drove into an *American* Wilderness ; and the Saints in Glory, could Men of your Spirit reach 'em, should not escape your Malignity ; you excommunicated Doctor *Owen*, and what was the Effect of it, considering Men immediately upon it began to think meaner of the Church, and better of the Meetings ? Your Neighbour, Mr. *Burkitt*, will tell you, 'tis no New thing to see Men Pretending Love to Christ, Oppose his Interest, and Persecute his Members. Bishop *Hall*, and out of him Mr. *Burkitt*, speaking of the Blind Beggar, *John* 9. thus, "O! Happy Man, that hast lost a Synagogue, and found Heaven ; who being "abandon'd of Sinners, art receiv'd of "the Lord of Glory.

But Mr. *Bennet* will be my Monitor to put me upon Repentance.

Ans.

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Ans. I'll accept of Help from any Hand, be it never so Dirty, and consequently from Mr. *Bennet's*. I believe Providence has a farther, as well as a purer, Design than Mr. *Bennet* ; possibly I had not been sufficiently humbled under the Remembrance of what pass'd whilst I was in the Church of *England*, and the World was to have this Account ; and what Party ever win or lose by it, let God be glorified, and I am satisfied.

But, Sir, would you know whether I have repented ? I answer, as Doctor *Owen* upon his Death-bed, I hope that is not to do now. I think it was my Unhappiness to have been Educated in the National Church ; It was my Sin, and is my Sorrow, I stay'd there so long ; I Adore the Divine Goodness that brought me out at last : So long as I believ'd the Oath Lawful, and was satisfied with it, I kept it, though not in the Bishop's Sense, yet in that Sense in which I took it ; when at *Haversham* I believ'd it no longer Lawful, I observ'd it not ; as to God there is no Excuse for Sin, but as to Man there is ; *Ye have been a Snare on Mispah, and a Net spread upon*

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Tabor ; if I had wrong Notions of Conformity, so had, and have, Hundreds of Young Men besides me ; why is there not more Care taken that Young Men may understand the Sense of the Church, if any of you know what it is ?

I would now in the Close of this Narrative Address my self to Three or Four Sorts of Men.

1. To the High-Church.
2. To the Moderate Church-men.
3. To Parish Officers.
4. To the Dissenters.

1. To Mr. *Bennet* and his Brethren of the High-Church : Pray Gentlemen of the Gown where lyes the Perjury ? It ought to be a very plain Case for which a Man is so highly charged ; but if this was thrown into the Convocation-House, among the Learned of the Nation, it would be a disputed Case. Does the Perjury lye in coming off to the Dissenters ? Or does an Oath, which a Person judges to be Sinful, continue to oblige him that took it ? Name if you can but one Casuistical Protestant Writer that asserts it.

The Protestant Princes in *Germany*, in Answer to the Emperor's Ambassador,
al-

alledge, that not only the Scriptures, but also the Canon Law, wou'd justifie 'em in not keeping a wicked Oath; for that says, That if any Man has sworn to do wickedly, he is not by his Oath oblig'd to do so, notwithstanding there can be no Bond against God: *David* swore to cut off *Nabal's* Family; but afterwards he blessed God for sending *Abigail* to prevent him. *Soterus*, the 11th Bishop of *Rome*, † teaches us, that rash, unwary, and dangerous, Oaths are to be rescinded, *Si aliquid forte incantius, &c.*

Mr. *Bennet* knows, no doubt, or I cou'd tell him, the Oath of all those take that enter into Orders in the Church of *Rome*; now according to Mr *Bennet*, and those of his Feather, the Jesuits, nor any other of the Popish Divines, may ever become Protestants, because they are under strong Ties to their Holy Father, the Pope; but this Point I think I have sufficiently argu'd in my Sermons on Separation, Page 7c. which he that has a Mind may see.

Again, will you lay it upon this? That I did not keep it whilst I judg'd it

† Inter Decreta *Soteri*.

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Lawful? To this I answer, 'tis a plain Falshood: I did not indeed keep it in the Bishop's Sense of it; but I observ'd it according to the Sense in which I took it.

Or will you lay it upon my Renewal of it upon my Restauration into the Church? No, you can't lay it there, for I had then both the Wisdom and Courage to explain and give my own Sense of the Oath; and to declare Twice or Thrice in open Court, that if my Lord would not give it me so, I would not take it at all.

I did not understand my self so well in those Days, or I should have seen that Protestation of mine Recorded.

Obj. But the Records of the Court don't mention this.

Ans. It may be so; it was not for their Honour.

Obj. But it could not be so given.

Ans. 1. Then the Bishop was to Blame to do it.

2. Some in Queen *Elizabeth's* Days were permitted to take the Oath with this Protestation, *viz.* That their Oath should oblige 'em to do nothing contrary to the Word of God, or what they judg'd so
to

to be ; again, when the Scotch Coronation Oath was by the Earl of *Argyle* tendered to King *William* and Queen *Mary*, when the King came to that Clause in the Oath, *We shall be careful to Root out Hereticks*, His Majesty declar'd, That he did not mean by those Words that he was under any Obligation to become a Persecutor ; to which the Commissioners made answer, That neither the meaning of the Oath, nor the Law of *Scotland*, did import it ; whereupon His Majesty reply'd, That he took the Oath in that Sense, and called the Commissioners, and others there present, to be Witnesses of his so doing.

But, Gentlemen of the Gown, this is it you must lay it upon, because my Lord laid it here, that is, upon my not Conforming according to Canon ; and if it be thus, you are, Gentlemen, under the same Condemnation ; for where, who, is he among the most Superstitious of you that does in all things conform according to Canon ? I never knew a Clergy-Man that did ; and I am sure the Clergy about me do not ; either then you must Excuse me, or Condemn yourselves ; and then all the Difference between
you

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you and me will lye here, when I saw my Danger I fled from it, and you still persist in yours.

That this was the Bishop's Sense is plain; when the Bishop was at another Time harping upon the same String, Mr. *R. Hatley* answer'd, *My Lord, then God have Mercy upon all the Clergy of England.* My Lord reply'd, *I say so too*; and if this be so, what shall we say for the Bishop himself, for he was Suspended by the Archbishop, as I was by him.

I hope the Clergy will not forget to Comm Mr. *Bennet* Thanks for his great Pains in proving 'em a Perjur'd Clergy; for if I am Perjur'd, so are they; I do not say they are Perjur'd, nor do I think so; for if I Condemn them, I Condemn my self; but Mr. *Bennet's* Proof falls as hard upon their Head as upon mine. I believe had Mr. *Bennet* understood the whole Matter of Fact which pass'd before a vast Throng of *St. Neots* People, he would not have Written that which should have compell'd me to have given this Narrative to the World. If Mr. *Bennet's* Relation be not credited, his Reputation is low with his Party; if it be credited, then 'twill rather

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ther tend to fill the Meetings, when People are once persuaded that they can hear none but a Perjur'd Clergy in their Parish Churches.

2. To the Men of Moderation among the Clergy.

Sirs, you must certainly be given up by your Brethren as Perjur'd Persons; but let nothing move you so as to turn you aside from Christ; they Love you no more than us; you must look for Trouble in your Stations, if Gracious: Some of my Neighbours conform'd abundantly less than I, yet were under the World's Smiles; serious Godliness will be the Butt of Malignity in every Age. Ministers may give New Names to their People, but without New Natures they'll be Troublesome Church-members, and Wound and Rend those they should most Love and Honour.

3. To Parish-Officers, Church-Wardens, &c.

Be Wise and Cautious in taking the Customary Oaths; have 'em explain'd to you, or say how you understand 'em; it is safe for you to Swear thus, That you will Execute the Office of a Church-Warden, or Constable, &c. according to

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the

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the best of your Judgment ; so I us'd to Advise my Church-Wardens formerly.

4. To the Dissenters.

Do you suppose that the Gentlemen that Write as Mr. *Bennet* does, do at all desire your Return to the Church of *England* ; if this be the Holiness of the Sons of the Church, unto their Assemblies mine Honour be not thou United ; cursed be their Anger, for it is Fierce, and their Wrath, for it is Cruel ; if this be their Way to Convince and to Convert us from our Schism, to make up in Reproaches what is wanting in Reasoning, this Method I am bold to say will sooner bring over Ten Church-men to the Dissenters, than Reduce One Dissenter back to themselves.

But again, if after the Light received in the Reformation, and what you have since received as Additional thereunto, you shou'd return, how will you, (as *Abner* speaks to *Amasa* concerning *Joab*) lift up your Face to God in the Great Day ?

O how dreadful a Delusion is this, That Men should be able to Place Religion in speaking all manner of Evil against others ? But too many are of Mr.

D—-r's

D——r's Mind, “ That the Dissenters
“ are Birds of Prey, and they that Prey
“ upon 'em do God good Service. No
Sin is too Odious to be thrown at the
Dissenters, especially at their Leaders,
who must first be ruin'd before their Peo-
ple can be scatter'd ; and in order to
Effect the Ruin of them they must
first blow up their Reputation ; but I be-
lieve such kind of Assaults as these carry
so much in them of open Design and
Malice, that they rather tend to Aug-
ment and Rivet Mens Reputations, than
Loosen 'em with the Sober-minded.

While we are abus'd, it will be no
small Comfort to us if we can say, we
don't so suffer because we are so bad,
but because we will be no worse ; it is
enough if we can hear those reviving
Words as spoken to us, *Well done good
and faithful Servants* ; for 'tis no New
thing for Men to cast out their Names as
Evil, whom the Great God has a Value
for ; if the same Men were always to Live,
(a *Doeg*, a *Shimei*) they would be known
and despised ; but in every Age there
will rise up Men of the same Spirit, and
we are to Form our Judgments of 'em,

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not by the Names they wear, but the Spirit by which they are acted.

If Mr. Bennet be a Man of Religion, he will acknowledge that the Court Records were Defective, and gave him but a Partial Account, and ask Forgiveness; which if he does, *As God for Christ's Sake Forgives us, so I Forgive him.*

But while Men Rage, I'll sit and Sing,
as Noah in his Ark, Ps. 86. pt.

I.

THE Sons of Pride against me rise;
Fierce Atheists are mine Enemies;
They Fear not God, they Love not me;
My Comfort is their Misery.

II.

They Mark me for their common Foe,
And jointly Plot my Overthrow;
But thou, my Lord, dost take my Part;
Thou, Lord, a God of Bowels art.

III.

III.

*Thou art most swift to Acts of Grace,
But unto Wrath of slowest Pace :
Thy Mercy and thy Truth abound ;
This is Faith's Everlasting Ground.*

IV.

*Whilst God is Merciful and True,
I am both Safe and Happy too ;
I cannot fall who lean upon
The Pillars of the highest Throne.*

V.

*O leave me not who follow Thee ;
Let Mercy look on Misery :
Save, Lord, for Thee I do Adore,
As did my Mother heretofore.*

VI.

*Save, Lord, one Born within thine House,
A Child of Prayers, and Tears, and Vows ;
Mine Eyes expect some happy Sign,
To tell my Soul that Thou art mine.*

VII.

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VII.

*Me with Salvation's Walls enclose,
To the Confusion of my Foes,
That they with Blushing may confess,
We cannot Curse whom God doth Bless.*

VIII.

*We cannot catch whom God will have;
We cannot hurt whom God will save;
We cannot touch his smallest Limb;
We curse our selves in cursing him.*

S I R,

You suggest that the Discipline of the Church was too hot for me.

Poor Feeble Revenge! Because I had accus'd the Church as wanting a Regular Discipline; and why should this be so great an Affront, when once a Year, by Order and Agreement, you your selves complain and lament it.

Dr. Owen said in his Day, he would prove, against any Two Doctors in Europe, that the Discipline of the Church of England was more Popish than Protestant.

The

in the Church of England. 63

The Church of *Rome* was once a Noble Vine, till it degenerated ; they were a Company Holy, Wise, and truly Venerable ; and so was the Church of *England* in the Reformation, till at last this Principle spoil'd their Beauty, they must amend nothing, lest they should lessen their Authority ; whereas it would have greatly strengthen'd it among the Good and Wise. The Church of *Rome* first grew Infallible, and then Incurable.

Instead of Church-Discipline, read Church-Tyranny, and I'll own as an honour upon me that I found it hot. Every one knows 'tis cool enough to to the Bad, nay, to the Worst of Men. Whence some Readers that know your Church (tho' they know not me) will probably gather, that this Mr. S. was not one of that Number. You could not love my Company then, it seems, and I could not like yours : I did well therefore in resolving, and better in keeping, those Resolves, that I would no longer hazard my Salvation in one Communion, when I might more Probably, and with less Distraction, secure it in another.

Ay,

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Ay, But the Court Records represent me as an Ill man.

Answer. Sir, those Records will not prejudice my Reputation among Wise and Thinking Men: What the Bishop says, the Court records, as I have observ'd already. If the Bishop give a Just or Unjust Sentence, 'tis recorded; and what kind of Sentence any Good Man must expect in those Courts, Persons of understanding, that carry their Eyes in their Heads, are very well aware; besides I have given the World an Account of the whole Matter, and I leave all Men that read what I have written, to Judge of the Justice or Injustice of such a Record; so that I deny not the Court Record, but I deny the Justness of that Record: The Moderate Churchmen on the Place, and those Dissenters that were Churchmen when I was Minister there, will bear me Witness, that I give a very exact Account of Matter of Fact; and so doing, have unravell'd Mr. Bennet's Mischievous Design, and unawares to him blown up the Authority of his boasted Evidence, the Court Records; and as a farther Evidence on my side, be it consider'd, that hereby the Church Party
lost,

lost, and continue to lose, Ground to this Day, and will so long as these Things remain fresh in the Memories of that Part of the Country ; and possibly Mr *Bennet*, when he is grown cool, may some Time hence think that it had been more for the Honour of the Church-Party to have kept these Things in their Graves ; however, believing that the Bishop was God's Friend, tho' made my Enemy, first by his own Mistake, and then by the plotted Mis-representations of evil Men ; and since I expect e'er long to meet him very Friendly in Heaven, I will say no more than what I am bound to do in my own Defence.

Again, by this Relation I am so far from reflecting upon the Reverend Bishops, (Men of Learning, Piety, and Moderation, such as we never had better since the Reformation) that I believe never a Bishop in *England* would have done what Bishop *Barlow* did : The reverend Dr. *Fowler*, present Bishop of *Gloucester*, who in those Days treated me with Singular Condescension and Candour, did sufficiently intimate to me, that he had Sentiments vastly different from my Lord of *Lincoln's* ; not only so, but I

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make

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make it a Question whether Bishop *Barlow* himself would have done it to any other Man besides my self, whom he always look'd upon as coming into the Place in Spight of him, (and Great Men can't bear a Contradiction from those that are Little) and I am confirm'd in this Perswasion, when I reflect upon my Lord's Carriage to my own Reverend and Holy Father, now with God, who liv'd above Thirty Years about Four or Five Miles distant from *Bugdain*, and always unmolested by him, thro' frequent Solicitations were not wanting.

C H A P.

C H A P. V.

The Dissenting Ministry is a True Ministry, Sent and Approv'd of God.

S I R,
YOU tell us †, That the Dissenting Ministers are Schismatics; that they usurp the Ministerial Office without a lawful Call; and that they have no lawful Call, because not Ordain'd by Bishops. You still call for one Single Instance of a Person Ordain'd without Imposition of the Bishop's Hand.

My Answer must be in several Parts.

1. As to your Instance, tho' you call for but One, Mr. Baxter has given you Two, one Scriptural, *Acts. 1. last. Mattathias* was Ordained without it. Another from Antiquity, *Gregory Thaumaturgus* was Ordain'd, as he tells you, by *Phœdinus*, tho' absent, *in vita Thaumaturgi* *.

† Pag. 64. * Calamy's Abridgment.

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2. This Notion of the Superiority of a Bishop above a *Presbyter* Mr. Bennet says is Evident as the Light. *Solem quis dicere falsum Audeat* ; Every Man that has Eyes can see the Light ; how 'is it that the greatest Part of the Protestant Churches can't see this distinct Order of Bishops ?

But more fully, this Notion is a Novelty : Queen *Elizabeth* in her Day would not bear this Clergy Pride : The *Scots* voted it a Grievance to the Subject. Would the Reader know how it came first among us ? In Archbishop *Land's* Time there was a Design on Foot to reunite the Church of *England* to the Church of *Rome* ; but seeing the Inferiour Clergy, as well as the Common People, were set against Popery, in order therefore to bring this about, they must first take away all Power from the Inferiour Clergy, as well as from the People, and lodge the whole of Church Power in the Bishop's Hands ; which if they could fully do, the Bishop then might lead 'em to *Rome*, or whither he pleas'd.

3. We have a better Call than yourselves. You would perswade the World, that

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that we are not true Ministers, because we have not a Legal Establishment: Sir, how will they prove themselves true Ministers that have a Legal Establishment, and no more? And 'tis too plain this is the Case with many in the Establish'd Church; for you want what is Essential to the Office of a Gospel Minister, that is, Election by the People, and their putting themselves under your Care*.

'Tis not I, Sir, but the Valuable Mr. *Burkitt*, who tells you roundly, that Unfaithful Pastors are no Pastors †; were the Jewish Church without Pastors? They had the Scribes and Pharisees: Yes; but, says he, they were no Pastors in Christ's Account, because Unfaithful Pastors.

“ You accuse me indeed of letting
“ your Arguments slip without Notice,
“ and that such Crafty Doings are too
“ common with me.

What an Antipathy have some Men to good Manners? I profess I omitted nothing (to my Knowledge) that had but the Face of Argument; but I o-

* *The True Dissenter, in answer to the Ax laid, &c.*

† On Mark 6. 34.

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mitted many Opportunities you had furnish'd me with of exposing you, as I have now likewise done, because, according to the Apostolick Canon, I would not provoke you.

I'll in a few Words make out the Dissenters Call beyond Sober Contradiction; the Objection you make against us is the same was made against the Reformers: *Claud. d'Espence* wonder'd by what Authority the Protestants took upon 'em the Office of the Ministry, and by whom they were Ordain'd; and seeing they had not receiv'd Imposition of Hands, how cou'd they be accounted Lawful Ministers? For it was manifest they had no ordinary Call; and they must prove an Extraordinary Call by Miracles, which they have not.

Beza at the Head of the Protestant Party made this Reply: "That Imposition of Hands was no necessary Note of a Lawful Call; the Two Principal were a due Enquiry into the Doctrine and Manners of the Person, and an Election of 'em to the Ministry.

That this was no raw, hasty, Answer, which the Protestants wou'd not stand to, is plain; for when *Maldonatus* the Jesuit makes the very same abovesaid Ob-

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Objection, the Calvinists answer him just the same in Sense. "We are sent, say they, by the Orthodox Church; if not according to the Canons of *Gratian*, yet according to the Canons of *St. Paul*; we pretend no more to Miracles than the first Reformers did: In this Reply they acquiesc'd; and if this was satisfactory to, and sufficient for, them, 'tis so for the Dissenters in *England*.

The Church does not make the Scriptures, which are the Rule of Faith: But when Persons embrace the Word of God, they thereupon become a Church: This is the clearest, as well as the shortest, Way of Vindicating the Commission and Call of the Reformers, without flying to a Precarious Lineal Succession.

Mr. *Bennet's* Second Argument consider'd.

Mr. *Bennet* has again said it †, that the Establish'd Clergy are the true and only proper Pastors of the People. I answer'd, no Man cou'd be so without Personal Choice: Thus Mr. *Bennet* asserted, and I denied; had I prov'd this (say you) I had done something: Why,

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Sir, what need that? My bare Assertion or Negation may go as far as yours; one would have thought that a denial of what you laid down had been enough to have put you upon bringing out your Proof, if you had any; besides, since you affirm that you are the only true and proper Pastors of the People, it lay upon you to Prove it; but in your Second Book you had Confidence enough to assert the same thing again, and still require me to take your Word. You indulge your self in an Unscholar-like Way of Arguing. Three pretended Arguments on a Point in Divinity repeated over and over, without one Text of Scripture; these, Sir, are the Divines that Preach and Print their own Fancies, (as you charge me with Respect to the Doctrine of Angels) who if they should lose their Bibles on the *Saturday*, would not miss 'em the next Day; but I'll give you Proof, the People chose their Deacons, *Acts* 6. that were to direct their Purse, much more their Ministers, in whose Hands they in some Sense entrust their Souls; again, People are required and commanded to hear True, and avoid False, Teachers; they were Christ's Enemies, not his Friends, as *Amesius* argues
against

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against *Bellarmino*, who, *John* 7. 29. cried, *This People who knoweth not the Law are cursed*; again, *Acts* 14. 23, *χειροτονήσαντες*; the Proper Signification of the Word is to chuse by Suffrage and Consent, which was manifested by holding up the Hand; nor was that Greek Word us'd for Imposition of Hands so early as in the Apostles Days. Lastly, the Relation of Master and Servant, Husband and Wife, and so of Pastor and People, are founded in Consent, and that mutual; may I chuse my Lawyer, my Physician, and not my Minister? Nor need they be Solicitous to wrest this Power out of the Peoples Hands, who design so to demean themselves as to Merit, and not again Forfeit, the Esteem and Affection of the Children of God.

Mr. *Bennet* has a Third Argument, which I come now to consider; we are Schismatics, says he, because 'tis our Fault that People are so miserably divided into opposite Parties; you mean, Sir, let it Rain or Snow, be fair Weather or foul, the Dissenters are the Cause; or if the Sea should overflow its Banks, and break in as far as *Colchester*, or whatever Calamity come upon the World, the Dissenters are the Cause of it; but

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some

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some busie Enquirer will be ready to ask, how are the Dissenters more the Cause of this Division than the Churchmen? Why, as to this Mr. Bennet must be consulted; I am not upon the Secret, 'tis above my Reach; but if I may have leave to Guess, 'tis only thus; our Adversaries love dearly to be in the Fashion; the Heathens formerly us'd to lay all their Calamities at the Christians Door; and if the Papists found things go amiss with 'em, they would presently cry out, God was Angry with them for not rooting out the Lutherans. *Art thou he,* (said *Abab* to *Elijah*) *that troublest Israel?* *Elijah* was but one Single Man, *Abab* had the Court and Kingdom on his Side; sure this Calumny will stick upon that Ring-leader of the Dissenters; but where was *Elijah's* Fault? Why, he stood firm for God, whilst his Neighbours ran another Way; but it was convenient that *Elijah* should be so mis-represented at that Day, and as convenient that the Dissenters should be so represented now; for if this be once made to appear, and the thing be really so, these Dissenters don't deserve to Live, and no Man need scruple plundering their Goods, taking away their Good Names, nor Life it self.

“ They

“ They are Vermine, says a good-natur'd
“ Neighbour of ours) and every Time
“ I kill one I do the Neighbourhood a
“ Kindness : Are these the Priests of the
God of Love, who neither own, nor
know, the Image of God when they
see it ? This Bitterness of Spirit wants
but the Smile of Authority and it would
soon break out into Blood. But who
are these Dissenters ? And what is it they
do that renders 'em thus the Object of
the Hatred of the World ? Why, they
are Men thoughtful about their Souls,
being convinc'd they are undone, lost,
perishing Sinners, and hearing that Je-
sus Christ, out of his Infinite Love, came
down from Heaven to Earth meerly on
this kind Errand, to Heal and Save 'em ;
and understanding that all Power is
lodged in his Hand, look upon them-
selves highly concern'd to Believe on,
to Love, and Please, him, are taking
what they judge the best Way in order
thereunto ; but is this all ? will some say ;
yes, this is all the Ground of the Quar-
rel ; and they that know more of the
Dissenters than this amounts to, knows
more of 'em than I do. *But still the
Dissenters cause the Divisions ;* why, what
do

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do the Dissenters more against the Church Party, than the Church Party do against them? I am sure (if I may be allow'd a capable Judge) the Bitterness is Five times more on their Part than on ours.

But possibly, Sir, you mean, that if the Dissenters did not go away from the Church, all would be in Peace. Man indeed in his Carnal Unconverted State is Secure and Quiet : *Laodicea, Rev. 2. thought herself Rich, and increas'd in Goods, and that she stood in Need of nothing, when she was at the same time Poor, and Blind, and Naked, and Miserable, and stood in Need of all things ;* let the Scales of Ignorance fall from the Eyes of such, they'll begin in Earnest to enquire after the Way of Life, and no longer be easie in sitting under a Dumb, Ignorant, or Careless, Ministry ; and now their Faults, and the Enemies Reproaches, come in like a Flood.

I gave you Two or Three Instances of those that did set up their own Ministry, and in plain Opposition to others, and did draw away the People after 'em, who yet were confessedly no Schismatics, which you very wisely slip over, (as
you

you causlessly charge me) and what you cannot answer, you Ridicule.

But, Sir, will you give me leave to put this Question, whether or no has the Lord Christ left any clear express Rule in the New Testament whereby the Common People may discern who are True Ministers, and who are not? If there be such a Rule, 'tis most fit we should with Seriousness attend to that; and such a Rule, Sir, we have in *Matth. 7. V. 15, — 20*, he bids his People beware of False Prophets; now how can they beware of 'em, if they cannot know and discern True from False; but Private Christians may know one from the other, for they are Commanded to try them, *1 John 4. 1. Believe not every Spirit, but try the Spirits whether they are of God; because many False Prophets are gone out into the World; and they are Commended for doing it, Rev. 2. 2. Thou hast tried them that say they are Apostles, and are not; and pray mind what follows, hast found 'em Liars; 'tis plain then that common People may discern 'em.* Now let us look back again to our Saviour's Rule; there we are Taught that the Way to discern True Ministers from False, is not by enquiring

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quiring into their inward Call, which is more for the Minister's one Satisfaction than the Peoples ; nor into their outward Call meerly ; that is, their Call from or by Man ; for Men may sometimes send those whom God does not send, *Acts* 20. 29, 30. There were some that arose from among themselves, and sent out to Preach, that prov'd Wolves ; so *Jer.* 14. 14. *Jer.* 23. 21. *I have not sent these Prophets, yet they ran, &c.* but the Rule that the Lord Christ gives us to know 'em by is this, *Ye shall know them by their Fruits* ; this Fruit principally Respects their Doctrine ; the True Minister brings a True, the False Minister a False, Doctrine, *Jer.* 14. 14, 15. *Gal.* 1. 7, 8. if to this we add an holy agreeable Conversation ; *Paul's Aim was to follow Christ* ; and also the Success of the Word by their Mouth, *Jer.* 23. 22. *But if they had stood in my Counsel, and had caused my People to hear my Words, then they should have turned them from their Evil Way, and from the Evil of their Doings ;* and so *Paul* of the *Corinthians* Conversion, *The Seal of mine Apostleship are ye in the Lord ;* then we have a full, and every way sufficient and compleat, Rule to know who

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are

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are True Ministers of Christ, and who are not; and then all the Noise about a Lincal Succession from the Apostles, and Ordination by the Hands of a Bishop, are meer empty sound, to Flatter your own People, and to Affright ours.

CHAP.

C H A P. VI.

*Remarks upon the different Modes of
Preaching, and their various Suc-
cesss.*

S I R,

I doubt not but some have flatter'd you that you have shown your self extremely Witty; but true Sterling Wit is always clean, and needs not the mixture of Prophaneness to set it off; he that reads good Books on Purpose to weed 'em will insensibly flay himself with the Stench; if this be a Spirit of Seriousness becoming the Character of a Minister of Christ, then I know nothing indeed of God, or of his Way.

But this you'll easily allow, that I know nothing of either; for I am, as is also my whole Party, despicably mean; this as to my self I can easily allow, though I don't remember that I ever heard my self called Fool till I left the Church; but that a whole Party should be condemn'd in a Breath, and that by
one

one who is but of Yesterday, who has read little in Divinity, and digested less, argues a most exalted Pride; but this “ was the Old Plea of the Heathens against the Christians; you have no “ Persons of Sense or Honour come to “ your Assemblies; you have none but Maids, Nurses, and Eunuchs: On this Account *Jerome* Wrote his Book, *De Viris Illustribus*, to shew that there were Eminent Men among the Christians.

My Book of Angels (which you have been critically searching) has, for ought I see, already obtain'd that Reputation with Sober Minds which your Feeble Attempts cannot Shock; nor do I observe Two Expressions of those you collected that I could wish to have alter'd; nor are these unprofitable and wild Conceits: Next to the Knowledge of what Christ has done for us, and the Spirit of God has done in us, there is nothing more Comfortable to the Church of God on Earth than the Knowledge of the continual Care of Heaven over us.

But I should have Taught the Necessity and Nature of Humility and Meekness; and why are there such Graces or

I

Vertues

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Vertues in the Christian Church? How is it then that he that is a Priest therein has nothing of 'em? But, Sir, I have done this already, and am doing it continually; but our Ministers may be well excus'd for not bringing to the Table the same Dish Five or Six times over, not having the Conveniences that you have, whose People have no Nice Stomach, or Distinguishing Palate; but such a Jovial, and not Over-serious, Clergy, are well suited to an Unthinking, Careless, People.

But are there not enough of the Living to Quarrel with, but you must throw off all Humanity, and disturb the Ashes of the Dead? You have found indeed some indiscreet Expressions in some Nonconformists Books, yet without Difficulty I cou'd make Reprisals on the Conformists to their Disadvantage; but I dare not allow my self in such a Way of Writing; 'tis an Office worse than the Scavengers; they take away the Filth and Nastiness they find, whilst Mr. Bennet brings it to us; but he that has a Mind to see such Trash, may find enough of it gather'd together by a Doctor of their own, in a Book he has Intituled, *The Contempt of the Clergy* †.

† *Century of Scandalous Ministers; he that will, may also see.*

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I'll grant *England* never had a more Learned Clergy since the Reformation. But the Learning, Sir, of many of you lyes in the midst of Trifles, which have very little Tendency to make you better Ministers, or better Men; I confess my self to be in no Danger of overvaluing that Divine who understands every thing better than his Bible.

The Excellency of Preaching lyes in its usefulness and fitness to attain its End, which is the Conversion of Souls from Sin, Satan, and the World, to God in Christ. It is evident to those that give themselves to observe God's Footsteps, that his Spirit does not so frequently breathe in exact and strict Composures, or Eloquent Harangues, as he does in a more free and liberal Way of speaking: Alas! how few of the common People read Treatises, but Preach as tho' you was talking with 'em? The most Ignorant will easily understand you.

But why should I tell Mr. *Bennet* of Conversion? "I know (says he) no
"other Seals of the Dissenting Ministry,
"than a Conversion from true Christia-
I 2 " nity

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"nity to the Glorious State of Faction *.

Ans. It may be so, yet the People can discern who have unprejudic'd Minds: *Saul*, as bad as he was, cou'd perceive the Lord was with *David*, 2 *Chron.* 15. 9. *Many out of Ephraim and Manasseh fell unto Asa*; the Reason of it follows, *for they fell to him out of Israel in abundance, when they saw that the Lord his God was with him*; and yet the Priests that officiated among the Ten Tribes either did not see it, or repin'd at it; a Clergyman told one of Mr. *Stoddon's* People, "It was less Sin to Play the Whore, than to hear a Nonconformist; a Mind deeply tinctur'd with Prejudice, don't see things as they are in their proper Colours.

If the Nonconformists could do Miracles, you wou'd not be convinc'd; you would say they were done by some unlawful confederate Power; Christ must Die for raising *Lazarus* from the Dead; nay, 'tis observable how fast a Spirit distemper'd with Rancour will grow upon us; we read in the next Chap. *John*

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12. 10. they voted *Lazarus* also should Die, though his Life was restor'd by a most uncontroulable Miracle.

You ask me what good my Preaching has done? What are those Seals of your Ministry? Sir, I dare not, with *David*, number the People; yet I look upon my self bound in Conscience to answer you with Seriousness, and with Meekness, and Fear; through the good Hand of God upon me, bad Men are become good, and good Men better; many ignorant Souls have been enlightned, the secure have been convinc'd of the Sin and Misery of an Unregenerate State, have fled to the Blood of Christ for Pardon and Life; the Weak have been strengthen'd, the Strong have been confirm'd, the Tempted have been reliev'd, the Dejected have been comforted; many that did not Pray are brought upon their Knees to God; some that could live in Sin, are now mourning over it, live in a daily Dedication of their Souls to Christ, and in a constant Endeavour after Universal Holiness; and if I can say thus much, whom you look upon, and not without Reason, to be one of the meanest among all the Thousands of

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Israel, what think you? Can the rest of my Brethren say, who have greater Grace, and better Gifts and Abilities, Go on, Sir, to Boast that the Bishop has laid his Hand upon your Heads; we will Glory in this, that the Lord has in our Ministry laid his Hand upon our Peoples Hearts, and has turn'd the Disobedient, Luke 1. to the Wisdom of the Just; and is by us preparing a People for his everlasting Presence in Glory.

C H A P.

C H A P. VII.

*Of Imposition of Hands, whether
Necessary or not.*

S I R,

I Had said I knew no Necessity of Imposition of Hands, thereby putting this into the same Rank with some other ancient venerable Ceremonies of the Church, now disus'd and laid aside; I did not deny the Expediency or Fitness of it in some Cases; upon this Mr. Bennet loses all Patience, as well as Modesty; and to afflict these despicable Independents, falls into a vein of praising the Presbyterians: Sir, I heartily concur with you in your Commendations of our Worthy Brethren, though done in Craftiness, not in Love; and add, that I Esteem the meanest of 'em above an invidious Praise. This is no sufficient Reason why we must keep up the use of a thing because 'tis Ancient; the Love-Fests us'd before the Lord's Supper were Ancient, but not being appointed

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pointed by Christ, had no Blessing from Christ; hence we read, *some were Hungry, and some were Drunken*; many in the Primitive Church did not Baptize their Infants, because they suppos'd they had no Original Sin: Again, some things of Apostolical Appointment were us'd so long as the Church saw they had a Blessing attending 'em; and when 'twas no longer so, they thought it time to lay 'em down; the Kiss of Charity was kept up, whilst it tended to beget and promote Christian Love and Peace; but when it was us'd Lasciviously, and became an occasion of Sin, it was laid down; the Primitive Church did for a long Time observe the Seventh Day Sabbath, that they might win the Jews; but when they saw they did not obtain their End thereby, they laid it down. I mention'd anointing with Oil in the Name of the Lord; adding, that so long as God own'd it by conveying Healing to the Sick by it, so long the Church kept up the Use of it; but when God ceas'd to own it in that Way, it was laid down; so anciently the Holy Ghost was conferr'd by Imposition of Hands, for which I gave you several Texts; but now that is
no

no longer so own'd, but is ceas'd; that Rite or Ceremony I did not say must, but might, also cease. Now if Mr. *Bennet* would have said any thing to the Purpose, he should have told me wherein the Difference betwixt these Two ancient and indifferent Rites lay; and why one was necessary to be kept up, and not the other, seeing God at this Day owns one no more than the other.

But when Mr. *Bennet* knew not what to say in answer to this, he wisely concludes to run it down with Banter and Ridicule, (the Modish Refuge.) They that look upon this Notion as a Novelty, discover their slender Acquaintance with good Authors.

In Marriage (say they) a mutual Consent is essentially Necessary, but a Publick Solemnization of it is not so; a Magistrate is a Magistrate before he is Inaugurated; a King is a King before he is Crown'd; a Minister is a Minister before Imposition of Hands; and the most that can be made of it is only Ornamental, as that which would give a Man
more

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more Credit and Authority among some Persons. The Scotch have declar'd that they don't look upon it absolutely Necessary, and so have the Dutch ; many of the Reformers, both Lutherans and Calvinists, have said as much as I did ; and if the Notion has (as you fancy) an Air of Novelty, yet 'tis a growing Notion in *England*.

But since you ill Resent it, I'll speak out my Mind more freely, having just before given you an answer every Way sufficient to take off your Objections against our Ordination by Presbyters ; I added this, *ex abundanti*, and by Way of Overplus ; meaning, that even those of the Dissenters that were most mean in your Eyes, had notwithstanding a better Ordination than yours, in that a plain Scriptural Ordination, with Prayer and Fasting alone, was preferable to your Ordination by Bishops.

“ But, say you, it may be you will
“ tell the World in your next Book, you
“ know no Necessity of the Elements in
“ Baptism and the Lord's Supper.

Ans. Baptism and the Lord's Supper
can't be administred without the outward
Elements, but Ordination may without
Im-

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Imposition of Hands ; and sure the outward Elements in the Sacraments, and Imposition of Hands in Ordination, do not stand upon the same Foot.

You farther tell me, " 'tis no Wonder the Man that Asserts this was judg'd the fittest Person to succeed Old B. the Wood-cleaver.

Here we have a Taste of the Spirit Ecclesiastick ; but in answer.

1. An honest Log-cleaver, adorn'd with Grace, and of a Serious Spirit, who fears God, and loves Holiness, is better Company than a scoffing Clergyman, and shall ever have an higher Room (I trust) in my Affections, than a Prophane Scholar ; nor was Solomon's Wisdom as yet departed from him, when he tells us, *A poor Man is better than a Liar ; and again, Better is a poor Man that walks in his Integrity, than he that is Perverse in his Ways, and is a Fool ;* the fam'd Origen, your admir'd Grotius, the Quaint Erasmus, and many more, were not Men in Holy Orders (as the Phrase is) yet are allow'd in the Publick Way of Writing to instruct the World ; why not then in the more Private Way of Preaching to a particular Congregation in

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in Cases of Necessity? *Edeſius* and *Fru-mentius* † Converted more Souls in one Month, than Mr. *Bennet* has ſince his Entrance into the Ministry to this Day.

Most Dissenting Churches desire ſuch Paſtors where Grace and Learning are in Conjunction; but they will by no Means call that Man to that Office among 'em whom they judge to be unacquainted with the Grace of God on his own Soul; hear *Thomas a Kempis*, a Papiſt of a better Spirit than ſome that bear a Pro- teſtant Name; “An Humble Soul, by
“the Grace of God, underſtands more
“the Reaſons of Eternal Truth in a
“Trice, than a Man that has ſtudied
“many Years in the Schools, becauſe
“he hath the Operations of 'em in his
“Heart*. But whatever this Log-cleaver was, where lyes the Crime of ſucceeding ſuch a Man? If the People were not well inſtructed in his Day, 'tis high Time they were; and I am not aſham'd to ſay with the Royal Prophet, *I had, Pſal. 84. rather be a Door-keeper in the*

† On whoſe Heads the Biſhop never laid his Hand as yet, whatever was done afterwards. *Socrates, Schol. L. 1. C. 19.*

* *Charnock, Vol. 2. 241.*

House of my God, than to Dwell in the Tents of Ungodliness ; tho' by the Way, the Contemptible Log-cleaver has driven his Wedge into that Holy Place, whither, unless God give *Mr. Bennet* a better Spirit than his Book discovers, he will never come.

Obj. The Independent Principles, says *Mr. Bennet*, will admit of no Government.

Ans. Because we desire to give the Lord Christ the highest Rooms in our Souls ; hence we are represented as a desperate Knot of Rebels. *Mr. Taylor*, to take off this Objection from the Dissenters in general, put the World in Mind, that the Dissenters at *Althrup* House, first gave King *William* the Title of Rightful Sovereign ; your Invidious Calumny, Sir, upon those denominated Independents, obliges me to add this to the aforesaid Testimony ; I had the Honour to be one of that Company, and the Person that summon'd the rest ; he, who was our Mouth, was so denominated, as well as the Majority of those that made up his Company.

C H A P. VIII.

The Conclusion.

IT was said of one of the Captains of the Assyrian Monarch, that he turn'd and went away in a Rage. But pray Sir, why all this Rage?

1. Is it that I'm become an Apostate? But it should be consider'd that there is a good and a bad Apostacy; we have a Rule given us by our Lord whereby to know when a Man is chang'd for the worse, *Matth. 5. 13. If the Salt have lost its Savour, &c.* you should, if you understand such things, first enquire what is the Savour of such a Man's Spirit: Is it increas'd or lost upon the Change of his Opinion? Some have turn'd from us to you, have lost their Savour, and gone out in a Snuff; some have turn'd from you to us, and their Salt has kept its Savour.

2. But why should I guess, when Mr. Bennet gives me the Reason? I may, he says, thank my Admirers, &c. He can't bear that a Dissenter should be respected as well as a Churchman; thus *Envy,*
as

as the Royal Preacher tells us, *Slay the Silly One*; nor did I know, till you was pleas'd to tell me, that I had so much Respect in these Parts; by your Angry Resentments you have really strengthen'd my Hands in God; for the Christians of *Essex* and *Suffolk* have been generally accounted among the most solid *Christians* of *England*.

But you have, Sir, taken a very unhappy Way to Cure my Admirers, for 'tis not with us as with your selves; our Respect is founded upon our Peoples Knowledge, not their Ignorance; and had you belong'd to a Dissenting Church, as meanly as you think of 'em, they would have requir'd you to have wash'd your Mouth well after such a Book before they had met you at the Lord's Table.

You threaten me with writing again; as you Please, Sir, for that, I have weigh'd your Strength, and neither Slight your Person, nor Fear your Learning.

But if, Sir, you fear an Answer, fill your next Book as you did this, with Personal Reflections, and Provoking Language, that I may Contemn it; but if you desire an Answer, Write close upon the Cause,

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Cause, and spare me not in your Arguments.

And now am I waiting what the Malignity of Man may do against me, being, through Mercy, fully satisfied my Times (as also the Reader's) are in God's Hand; not being wholly without Expectations, that the Great God may Accept of Honour from me, in a Way of suffering for his Name, before I go out of this World.

I am,

S I R,

your Real Friend,

T. Shepherd.

A P P E N.

APPENDIX.

WHilst I was writing, there comes to my Hand a Defence of Ministerial Conformity, drawn up by Mr. Olliffe, with the Joint Concurrence of several *Buckinghamshire* Ministers *; I was aggrieved to see those good Men represent us as Persons Over-scrupulous, and more Nice than Wise. The Nonconformists can account it an Honour (as I my self also do) to be the Butt of Malignants, and can well enough defend themselves against the Bitter, and the Sottish, without any Answer at all: Such Books as the *Friendly Debate*, and Mr. Bennet's *Defence*, rather strengthen than weaken us: For when the Common People (who will see with their own Eyes, tho' they may be for a

* As I am Inform'd.

while

while impos'd upon) know that we are abus'd, and injurously dealt with, they do the more love us, and loath our Persecutors. But when Satan speaks in *Peter's* Mouth, it will end in *Christ's* Grief, and *Peter's* Shame.

These Worthy Persons design to soften the Terms of Conformity, and tell us they may be thus understood; and if they may, then they ought.

Answer. The greatest Part of their Brethren will not allow of this soft Sense of theirs; they may see, if they please, how Bishop *Barlow*, the greatest Calvinist in *England*, treated me, who had just these Notions of Conformity that those Worthy Divines have.

However, these Reverend and Godly Divines have unawares done me a very Singular Kindness, as tho' the good Providence of God had stirr'd 'em up to Write my Defence, and at this very Time to send it Abroad: I adoringly bow to the Divine Wisdom which has hitherto so well govern'd this Raging Tempestuous World; and since I must be traduc'd as a Perjur'd Person, 'tis a Comfort to have so much Good Company, as well
as

as some Bad: For in this Point I am altogether upon the same Bottom with the Clergy of the Establish'd Church.

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